

**AFFIDAVIT IN SUPPORT OF A CRIMINAL  
COMPLAINT/ARREST WARRANT**

I, Brad Smith, Special Agent, Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), Hampton, Virginia, being duly sworn, state the following:

1. I am a Special Agent with the United States Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), where I have worked since March 2004. Before joining the DEA, I was a police officer for seven years in Hampton, Virginia, spending three of those years assigned to a narcotics investigation unit and two years as a Task Force Agent assigned to the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (ATF). With DEA I was assigned to the DEA Miami Field Division until October 2016 when I transferred to the Washington Field Division and am currently assigned to the Hampton Post of Duty. I have received specialized training regarding the detection and investigation of drug trafficking organizations while with the police department and DEA. I have also acquired knowledge regarding these subject areas through practical experience by participating in narcotics investigations during my work with the police department and DEA.C

2. I have probable cause to believe that Junior SMITH-MERIA, Juan Emiliano SANCHEZ-CASCANTE, Julio CESAR-FLORES and Manfred Deihann HIDALGO-CHING have committed the following offense in violation of federal law: Manufacture, Distribution, or Possession of a Controlled Substance on a Vessel (46 U.S.C. § 70503). Your affiant is aware these crimes may be prosecuted in any district of the United States. (46 U.S.C. § 70504).



**PROBABLE CAUSE IN SUPPORT OF ARREST WARRANT**

3. Since November 2018, members of the DEA Hampton Post of Duty, in partnership with DEA Bogota and Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) Norfolk, have been investigating maritime smuggling operations based on the Pacific coast of Colombia. Your affiant is aware that drug trafficking organizations will utilize vessels such as Go-Fast Vessels, hereafter referred to as GFV, to transport multi-hundred kilogram shipments of narcotics from the west coast of Colombia to awaiting transfer vessels or destinations throughout Central America or Mexico.

4. In May 2020, members of the investigative team learned of a GFV that was planning to transport nearly 1,500 kilograms of marijuana from the area of Punta Aji on the west coast of Colombia to an awaiting vessel being dispatched from Central America. Members of the investigative team coordinated with various United States maritime patrol assets and, on May 19, 2020, the United States Coast Guard (USCG) Cutter James detected a GFV with no indicia of nationality located in the area of 83NM SW of El Cacao, Panama, in international waters.


5. After gaining positive control of the GFV a USCG boarding team encountered Junior SMITH-MERIA, Juan Emiliano SANCHEZ-CASCANTE, Julio CESAR-FLORES and Manfred Deihann HIDALGO-CHING, and subsequently seized approximately 88 bales containing approximately 1,500 kilograms of marijuana totaling approximately 3,353 pounds of marijuana, a schedule I controlled substance. All four mariners found aboard the GFV were detained and are being transferred to the Eastern District of Virginia for prosecution.

WHEREFORE, based upon the above information, your Affiant believes probable cause exists to charge Junior SMITH-MERIA, Juan Emiliano SANCHEZ-CASCANTE, Julio CESAR-



FLORES and Manfred Deihann HIDALGO-CHING with Manufacture, Distribution, or Possession of a Controlled Substance on a Vessel (46 U.S.C. § 70503).


FURTHER YOUR AFFIANT SAYETH NOT.

  
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Brad Smith, Special Agent  
Drug Enforcement Administration

Reviewed by:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Eric M. Hurt  
Assistant United States Attorney

Sworn and subscribed to  
before me telephonically  
On this 4<sup>th</sup> day of June 2020

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Douglas E. Miller  
United States Magistrate Judge  
Norfolk, Virginia

Douglas E. Miller, USMJ  
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